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## BOMBAY YATRA

### He was special and he knew it

Bhawana Somaaya

**Mumbai, August 13:** Often when we are introduced to a person, we don't understand the impact he is going to have on our lives. But time reveals to us later, the role destiny has determined for him.

I was introduced to Hosi Vasunia in the winter of 2000 at The Indian Express' office in Nariman Point. It was my first day as editor of Screen. "He will be your creative partner in the hosting of the Screen Annual Awards," said Ananya Goenka, our then CEO.

The magnitude of the event sank in much later. As the day approached, the pressures related to the event multiplied. I had thought that after two decades in show business, I would be able to cope with all pressures, but nothing could have prepared me for the devastation to follow. With each passing day I found myself desperately groping for some sanity in life.

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One desolate evening, I was sitting by my desk weighed down by a pending crisis, when Hosi sailed into my room, "This is just the beginning," he said theatrically, "You better get ready for the battle."

I did. Over the years, during our preparations for the annual event, there were several challenges but Hosi and I bonded in crisis. On some occasions, we disagreed and had frequent outbursts. As creative people, we were both highly temperamental. But our third partner, Sandip Khosla, the vice president of the paper, was the balancing factor.

During the creative meetings held in our own office, or at the STAR office in Marol, Hosi was the centre of all attention.

He detested driving to the suburbs and tried every trick in the book to change the venue or postpone the meeting. He never succeeded. So he would arrive with an exasperated expression and a standard opening line, "Somebody, please do something about the potholes before the city kills all of us!"

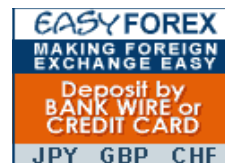
But once he had had his favourite chicken sandwich and a fresh lime soda, he would recover. Then he would be back to playing his pranks.

No matter how exhausted he was, he never failed to compliment a beautiful girl and never failed to cheer up a disturbed colleague.

Everyone in the group knew almost instinctively when Hosi was hungry and what he wished to eat. The girls particularly fussed over him and ordered his favourite ice-cream. When the discussions continued for long hours, Hosi was the first to get restless. Then the boys would coax him to go out and have a cigarette. Ten minutes later, Hosi would return feeling refreshed.

He was special and he knew it. That is why he never played it safe. He always expressed what he felt, without mincing words. When he was angry, he let off steam without apologies. He was confident that he would be judged on merit.

We will always miss you Hosi, and the creative meetings will never be the same



without your pranks.  
(Bhawana Somaaya is the editor of Screen)

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